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*Description of a trip to the Gilgit Valley, a dependancy of the Mahárájá of Kashmír.—By CAPT. H. C. MARSH, 18th Bengal Cavalry.*

(With three plates and a map.)

Starting in the summer of 1875 from Srínagar, the chief town of Kashmír, my route lay through the pretty valley of the Pohar river and over the watershed dividing the drainage of the Jhelum and the Kishn-ganga. I crossed over the latter river by a slack twig-rope bridge and continued up the Kheył nála, a small tributary coming from the highlands under the immense mass of the Nanga Parbat mountain on the borders of Chilas.\* I arrived at the Mír Malik district of the Astor country by an hitherto almost unknown pass, called by the Astories 'Sheothur' or Bone-cutting, about 15,000 feet high, at that time covered with snow; and marching through the Astor valley (a brief description of which I gave in the 'Pioneer' of January 1876), I found myself at the desolate village of Bunji on the arid banks of the Indus river on the 16th July.

The wars between the former rulers of Gilgit, especially those of Goraman against the Dogras, as the Kashmír troops are generally called, have devastated a once flourishing district, for such it was, in the times of Ahmad Sháh, the former ruler of Skardu.

The present aspect of the Bunji plain is a desert. There are a few fields and trees round the fort itself, the whole country slopes from the high snow-

\* A sketch of the Mazena Pass leading into Chilas is given. It was hitherto almost unknown, and is situated at the head of the Roupel Nála, one of the glaciers of the Nang Parbat. The Pass is only open in September and October, and is little used.

clad peaks at the end of the Astor Valley towards the Indus, and is covered with stones and boulders, gravel and sand, cut up by many dry watercourses, presenting the most forbidding aspect of a country brought to ruin by contending factions, not only Dogra and Gilgit, but Astor and Chilas, also Chilas and Dogra, all at various times, within the last twenty-five years, choosing this unfortunate place as a battle-ground. The traveller leaving Kashmír and journeying through these narrow, poor valleys cannot understand why such unproductive conquests should have been undertaken by the Kashmír Government. Even for the greed of dominion, little or no advantage has accrued to the conquerors. In short, the Dogras, in their ideas of conquest, committed a great blunder in annexing either Astor or Gilgit, as both have been a burden on the State ever since their acquisition, Astor having to be supplied with grain for the troops required to hold it, and Gilgit only just supporting the small garrison located there. Even if the taking of Astor is advanced on the plea of strategy, so as to gain a good natural and political frontier on the Indus, what can be urged for crossing that frontier into a far off and useless country like Gilgit, of small resources and difficult to hold.

The former inhabitants of Bunji were Shins mixed up with Bhútiahs from Skardu, but latterly, before its final destruction about 1852, most of the people were Shins from the opposite and populous valley of Sye. The Fort was rebuilt by the Dogras in that year, but the fertilizing canal which used to bring water from the adjacent nála was not repaired, so that the present village consists of less than a dozen houses of Kashmíri thieves, transported to the place, and a company of sepoy in the fort.

The few fields are eaten up by grasshoppers that annually appear about harvest time, and the villagers have a constant struggle for life. The soldiers are fed on Kashmír grain.\* The summer heat here is great, the thermometer Fah. marking from 69 to 95 in the shade and over 104 in the sun.

The ferry over the Indus is about two miles from the Fort. The latter is situated at least 500 feet above the river. There are only three boats, such as are used in Kashmír for ferry purposes, each capable of holding some 30 people. The river runs about three miles an hour and is from 500 to 600 feet broad. The road lay through old uncultivated fields, and descending by a winding path down two terraces to the banks of the river, we waited till the Kashmíri boatmen arrived to convey us over. On the bare bank a garden has recently been planted. The natives are very superstitious, and only after many invocations to God for protection on the unstable element, did they allow myself, pony and coolies to embark, a sepoy accompanying me. The two boatmen were not powerful enough by themselves, so we

\* For a description of this grain supply see the "Pioneer" of 17th December, 1875, for my account of Ponies in 'Kashmir'.

all had to take to the paddles and urge the unwieldy craft to the opposite or right bank, which is higher than the left, and crowned by an old fort. The scenery of the river is desolate but grand; the surrounding hills, some 20,000 feet high, are bare of vegetation, steep, and in winter peaked with snow, which, however, seldom falls in the valley itself.

Shortly after leaving the river and entering into the Sye valley, which is watered by a stream falling into the river just below the ferry, we came to the first village of a few houses called Dumrote, surrounded by green fields and fruit trees, a pleasant contrast to the desolation on the Bunji side.

After marching up the Sye river three or four miles, we arrived at the junction of two streams, and crossing the Sye, by wading one half and the other half by a bridge, we made a short halt at the village of Sungrot, a large, well populated place, to change our coolies, the Astor ones having come four marches with us, as none were procurable *en route*.\* The Vizier, Bagdur Sháh, a Shin, lives here, and is the chief man in the valley; he came to pay his respects, and helped me to get men to carry my traps. The Sye valley from this point contracts, and the path leads along the right bank of the Sye river close to the water. At times the river floods the road. This wild and desolate scene continues for four miles, with high steep hills on each side, when again the valley opens out to nearly its former size, about a mile broad, at the village of Chakerkot.

Here all was smiling plenty and peaceful repose, green fields of wheat, barley and other grains, such as Trombu and China, together with fig, walnut, grape, and mulberry trees, on all sides. The clouds which had been threatening, here broke over us with a crash of thunder, the rain deluging us in a moment, and glad were we to find shelter in the small enclosed masjid of the village. The mosques of these countries are enclosed and have deep verandas round them, if in populous places; if not, they are simply a square room with a small door and a hole in the roof to let out the smoke of the fire, which generally burns all day long.

I was soon surrounded by the simple villagers, but unfortunately not understanding their language, Shina, could keep up but a broken conversation in Persian with the Mullá, who only knew a few words.

After the storm was over, we came out and found the court in front full of people, mostly children, who had come to see the Firingí, or Farang. Again changing coolies, we continued our march through the pleasant fields and under the shade of fruit trees. The path ascends the valley, passing

\* The method of forced labour in these countries is unavoidable with the present arrangements, causing great discontent and even desertion into other countries. All might be obviated by a good road to facilitate pony traffic.

many small hamlets and solitary farms with pretty scenery, till the village of Jugrote is reached five miles from Sungrote. Here my tent was pitched, close to the well-kept mosque.

The lower and inhabited part of the Sye valley, only twelve miles in length, owing to its fertility, is the envy of the surrounding countries. The inhabitants are all Sunní Muhammadans of the Shin clan, and this small community never having been able to hold its own against its more powerful neighbours, Gilgit and Chilas, has passed from hand to hand according to the varying fortunes of either tribe, but still has escaped the fate of Bunji, owing, no doubt in part, to the people being more industrious and helping one another, and in part to the great fertility of the soil and plentiful supply of water. The people are an independent set and must be gently used, as they brook little tyranny at the hands of the Kashmíri; for if taxed too heavily, they pack up their goods and chattles and making a flying march with their families and cattle, go over into the Yaghy or Free country of Gor and Dareyl, which are situated at the back or west of their valley.

There is another road to Gilgit higher up the Indus and along the Gilgit river, from its junction upwards, not used for some years past, a part of the road having been carried away into the latter river by an earthquake.

Continuing my route, the road to Gilgit leads straight up the Sye valley to Jugrote, and the Pass of Niladar between the two countries overhangs the village. The south side of the Niladar pass is easy, but has no water on it; the lower ascent is gradual, over a stony hill side, but the upper part is steep and rocky, all of a red colour. A well defined path leads all the way up the Pass, which I traversed on foot. The summit, reached in about two hours, disappoints one as to the view. The Sye valley and Indus below look pretty, Bunji a dark speck of green on a red field. A short distance still further up, the Barbuni\* valley can be seen, but of Gilgit, little more than a confusion of rocky bare peaks, the river being hidden in its deep bed.

The descent is very long, but at first gradual, and if we divide it into four parts, would be described as the 1st and 2nd parts an easy slope over a bare waterless gravelly plateau. A large herd of urial, or wild sheep, enlivened the scene; they kept too far off to give me a shot, galloping away out of sight over fearful ground. In the 3rd part, the descent becomes more rough and steep, the river below, with a part of its valley, comes into view, as the path leads more to the north-east and parallel to the Gilgit river, the lower part is the most trying, still steeper and rougher, till at last we scrambled down into the river bed by a nearly precipitous cliff, and rushed to drink of its muddy waters, now swollen by melting snows. The path then leads up the steep bank again, crossing many wearisome

\* The local name of the Sye River, which rises on the south slopes of Pehot Mountain, on the boundaries of Dareyl and Gilgit.

ravines, till, fairly tired out, the traveller (riding not being easy on such a rough road) at length arrives at the high slope on which Minnor, the first large village in the valley, is situated.

I reached this place at 2 P. M., having been on the move from dawn, the distance is about 12 miles.

The Justero, or Headman, brought me a 'dollie' of fruit, which was most acceptable to a weary man. The village contains about 30 houses and is prosperous; the inhabitants are Shins as in Astor, and mostly understand the Hindústání spoken in the Panjáb, owing to their intercourse with the Dogra troops, which have occupied the country continuously since 1860. I remained at Minnor two days. It was most enjoyable under the shade of the walnut trees in the village green, but in the middle of the day in the sun, the heat was great. The peculiarity of this village was, that it kept no poultry, because, as the old Justero told me, in former days, they had had a great faction fight among themselves, owing to the fowls of one of the villagers having got into the garden of another, and eaten some of the fruit in it: after the fight was over and their hot blood had cooled down, the old men made all swear that they would never keep any more fowls in the village. But though I could not obtain fowls, I had plenty of food brought me as presents in return for my medicines.

I always travel with a supply of common drugs, and invite patients to come to me for treatment, which obtains for me free intercourse with all classes of the people, men, women, and children. There are no medical men in those parts, and the poverty of the masses prevents them from obtaining medicines for themselves, besides their ignorance is great on all such matters. They require very strong drugs to affect them, croton oil being a favourite. The quacks of the country generally use poisons, such as arsenic, in small doses, as purgatives.

Next day we started early, so as to arrive in Gilgit before the great heat. We soon got clear of the range of the village fields and the shade of trees, back into the heat and glare; ther.  $103^{\circ}$  at noon in shade. A fine view of the Gilgit valley was before us, the river below, the bare rocky hills on each side with the snowy peaks of Hara-mush, 24,000 ft.; Dubani, 20,000 ft.; and Rakiposhi, 25,000 ft. high, in the distance to the north-east.

The valley is three miles broad at its greatest width, but opposite Minnor only a mile. The villages are situated where sufficient water can be obtained for irrigation purposes. The supplying streams have thrown up a sloping plateau with the débris brought down from the hills. On these high slopes the villages are built, surrounded by trees, and easily seen at a distance, owing to the whole country being a light red colour without vegetation.

The path is good and fit for ponies. We passed through the small village of Sakewan, watered by a stream which, like that of Minnor, nearly dries up in

August; then on again over desert till the Sonéup stream is reached, which flows from the peak behind the hills to the west, called Kumeregah, a day's march off. Half the water is wasted, as is usual in these countries, owing to carelessness and indifference: no tanks or dams are made to retain water for the dry season; water-wheels are also unknown. We forded the stream, sweet to drink, but icy cold, and rested in the village of Jutial just beyond, from whence is seen, far below, the plain of Gilgit, with its Fort by the river side. Here we had a great feast of grapes, rich clusters hanging within reach of the road side. Throughout the country grapes are not picked by the people before they are fully ripe. A day is fixed for the vintage, when they are cut by the men and carried home by the women with great rejoicing; most honestly is this custom carried out, they do not object to a stranger eating, but will not touch them themselves, they also impose a fine of a kid on any one found trespassing. The old Justero of Minnor's little son was brought to me for treatment, and on asking him if he had eaten anything that morning, after a great deal of pressing and persuasion, he acknowledged he had eaten some grapes!!! A roar of laughter was raised at this answer by the bystanders, as the old man would have to pay a kid for the boy's fault.

I had a deal of trouble and delay, caused by the frequent changing of coolies, as they will only go from village to village. No amount of pay could induce them to go beyond the next village; for they hate carrying loads, and do not care for the few pice they can thus gain.

The plain immediately surrounding the Fort, the centre around which the many villages are dotted, is about four miles long and two miles broad, bordered by the river to the north, Jutial to the south and east, and the heights of Nafur to the west. It is about 200 feet above the river, and is plentifully watered by a canal, taken out four miles up the river; on its right bank it is well cultivated and peopled.

On passing the first few houses of the village, the coolies asked me where I should like to camp, so I chose a nice dry spot under a walnut tree about 400 yards from the garden, in which lie the remains of poor Hayward, who was murdered in Yassin in 1870. - I did not go near the Fort, because of its disagreeable proximity to the Dogra sepoy, a dirty lot. The great object in choosing a camping ground, is to escape from the musquitoes which infest all damp places in the valley.

Close to me were encamped two other travellers, who were having a national dance performed by some Gilgitis. It was an animated scene, we sat in the inner circle, and were surrounded by a large crowd of Dogras and villagers, all attracted by the sound of the fifes and drums, to which the dancers kept time. Some of the dances were 'Pas-de-seul', others again were danced in a circle by a number of young men, the pace and gestures of each

increasing as they warmed to their work, all keeping pretty good time with the leader of the dance. Amongst those assembled on this occasion were the Kárdár, or Governor, of Gilgit, an old Sikh, Bhai Ganga Singh, the General commanding the Kulla fauj, or Militia, Mán Singh, and Colonels Tej Singh or Teju, and Hushiára, commanding the two Regiments quartered here, also the Vizier of Gilgit, Ghulám Haidar, and some of the people from Yassin, who were accompanying the Envoy sent to the Governor of Gilgit. The same evening we heard of the death of the wretch Mír Walí, the murderer of Hayward, he having been shot ten days previous to our arrival. The following statement was the account we heard :

Hayward was killed by order of Amán-i-Mulk, ruler of Chitral, by Mír Walí, the Rájá of Yassin, his son-in-law, who was assisted by Rahmat, his prime minister or Vizier, and Muhammad Rafí' Nabí Beg, foster-brother to the Mír. Nabí Beg's mother having, from the death of his own mother, brought up Mír Walí from the cradle. The unhappy traveller was murdered just outside the village of Darkot, a march beyond Yassin towards the Pamir Steepe. When Mír Walí obtained Hayward's loot or property, he fled to Badakhshán with it, and asked the assistance of the Duránís of Kábul, to recover his country from Phailwan, his younger brother, who had been given the throne of Yassin on his flight to Badakhshán. Mír Walí stated he fled, because he fancied Amán-i-Mulk wished to get him into trouble with the Kashmír authorities.

About two months ago (May 1875), Mír Walí, still with the Duránís, finding that Amán-i-Mulk retained a bad feeling against him (for not giving him a part of the spoil) and would not return him his country of Yassin, sent his wife, Amán-i-Mulk's daughter, and her little son five years old, to him, to Chitral, saying, "If you will not make friends with me, at least do something for your own daughter and her son, let him have Yassin; if not, I will get Durání help and bring a force against you."

Amán-i-Mulk, Rájá of Tatial, as that part of Chitral round the Fort is called, being uneasy at these threats, determined to throw himself into the hands of the Duránís, with whom he had been lately far from friendly, because they had been trying to take some small forts from him,\* so he sent Phailwan to Takhtpul near Balkh, to the Durání Governor of Turkistán, with a message, saying "I will salám to you, give you my daughter in marriage and all my wealth, if you will turn Mír Walí out of Badakhshán." The Duránís had on Mír Walí's first flying to them demanded of Amán-i-Mulk his restitution to Yassin, but now on Amán-i-Mulk's overtures, turned against Mír Walí and ordered him out of their territories. Mír Walí had, since

\* These forts are situated on the south slopes of the Hindu-Kush, on the confines of the Bashgali or Káfir country, which shows that Kábul is trying to extend her rule beyond Badakhshán into Chitral by the Dorah Pass from Zebak.

his murder of Hayward, been staying at a small place called Gurgial, close to Kil'ah Punj, a few days journey to the north of Chitral across a range of the Hindu-Kush, called Yarkun.

Phailwan, as soon as his embassy proved successful, returned to Yassin, and about fifteen days ago (4th July, 1875), Mír Walí, having been turned out of Gurgial, was coming over the Yarkun into Mustach, when he was way-laid in a narrow spot, quite close to that place, by two sons of Hayát Núr, Phailwan's Vizier, with 50 or 60 men. Mír Walí had 40 Chitral and Yassin men in his pay, who had shared his fortunes, also his foster-brother Nabí Beg, who had assisted to murder Hayward, and was his factotum; as soon as the Mír saw the ambuscade into which he had fallen, he drew Hayward's revolver and shot at one of his enemies, the ball striking his head and glancing off the turban. Mír Walí was then killed by two bullets, together with three of his men, the rest were captured—of the Yassin party Hayát Núr's youngest son was killed together with several men. Nabí Beg is amongst the prisoners.

This is the account accepted generally by the people themselves of this affair. The next day, my two friends left for Astor.

I found great difficulty in getting my shoes and chuplis, or sandals, mended; they do not cure leather by tanning, in all the countries of Yagistan, but simply rub it together till it becomes like wash leather. Of course all leather articles waste away like paper in wet weather, and the people depend on harness or sword belts from Kashmír or Badakhshán, from whence they also obtain their matchlocks.

The people are very ignorant, and less warlike than their neighbours, which accounts for their having been conquered. When the Dogras first came into Gilgit in 1847, they found all the now cultivated land, a jungle of wild fruit trees, with a few huts, in which the inhabitants lived in wet or cold weather. This jungle they first cleared, and only in the last eight years have the people been taught to cultivate the land as they ought.

I went to see the Fort, built of earth many years ago by Gurtam Khán, a former ruler of Gilgit. It has changed hands many times, and has often been demolished and rebuilt. Goraman rebuilt it of stone and mud, lime being unknown to these people. Within the last fifteen years, the Dogras have entirely rebuilt it on a new site close to the old Fort, which lies a heap of stones. It is now built of beams of wood, stones and clay in layers, the wooden frames helping to bind all firmly together. There are double walls; the inner court is used as a store-room for provisioning the garrison. Its armament consists of 1 small six-pounder brass gun, 6 "sher-bachas", or 1 lb wall piece swivels, and six large "jazáils", or two ounce matchlocks.

The garrison is made up of about 500 men, mostly militia. They drill daily after a fashion, and, for the country, are a sufficiently powerful force



in ordinary times, to hold the place. The fort is on the banks of the river, 100 feet above it, and depends on the river for water, a covered way leading down to it. The other day an earthquake shook down one of its bastions, which was being repaired during my stay. The highest bastion commands the river on both banks and the whole plain. A few of our shells would soon demolish the whole affair.

The difference of level of this river in the hot and the cold weather is fully 20 feet. It contains few if any fish, and the sand is not washed for gold as is the stream coming from Hunza and Nagyr, which contains quantities of the precious metal. The snows melting in July and August on the Pamir and highlands of Yassin, raise it to its highest level; in winter it can be waded across at most parts, up to the junction of the Nagyr stream, at the village of Dyor, a short way below the fort, from which point till it joins the Indus it is too deep. No boats are used on the river, nor are rafts brought down its floods. Only one bridge of twig ropes crosses at Gilgit, the opposite or left bank not being as well inhabited as its right.

There are many who speak Persian among the Gilgitis; some Yassinis are met with, as a Vakíl and ten men are detained here and changed from time to time. These are guarantees for good behaviour, which shows that Kashmír exercises a certain amount of influence out of its own immediate boundaries, as the Rájás of Hunza and Nagyr also send Vakíls, but no Kashmírí is allowed to live in either Yassin or Kunjut, as Hunza and Nagyr are called, although they are separate and independent states.

I have daily large presents of fruit brought to me by my poor patients, grapes of three sorts, white, yellow, and red; apples of two sorts; water-melons large and sweet, long in shape, also cucumbers and figs, the fruits now in season. In the evenings, I have large audiences, visitors coming from far and near, to talk. I do not think the people are such bigoted Muham-madans, as in our North-West frontier, and a Medical Missionary who understood the dialects spoken, would have a fair chance of being listened to patiently. These people are very ignorant, though a few learn the Kōrán by heart, both men and women.

Manufactures are very rude, a coarse cotton cloth, about fifteen inches broad, and quite plain, also a stuff of wool. Wooden platters, bowls, and spoons, very bad soft knife blades, no guns or swords, or leather articles. Boots, or Pabus, made like moccasins, are of raw hide, and are used only in dry weather, and a description of long stockings made by women of coloured wool like a bag without a heel; some of the patterns are pretty and effective. All well-to-do persons wear these, but like most articles they are made for home use only, few being obtainable in the market. The head dress of the people is not a turban, but a broad topped cap made like a bag, its edge being rolled up, so as to form a thick brim, which can be pulled down over the ears and neck in cold weather.

The name Boté, as the people call themselves, is not to be confounded with the Bhútias or Tibetans. The name is derived from the cap, so that all who wear this headdress, be they Shí'ah, Sunní, Astorí, Gilgití, or Chílásí, Shín, or Yeshkun, are Boté, although the difference of language is great between all these countries, especially the latter. Of the two castes, if one might so call them, the Shín is the highest, and forms a comparatively small, but influential body throughout Astor, Gilgit, Guaris, and parts of Chilas; they are careful to intermarry only among themselves, but of late years, the Yeshkun, or mixed breed, is unavoidably increasing, owing to the pressure put on by the Kashmírís, who all like to intermarry with Shín families if possible. The Shíns are a fine class, and look upon themselves as the *crème de la crème*. In Gilgit there are about 100 families of pure descent, they are looked up to as upright honest people, whose word and faith may be depended upon, in fact most of the heads of the villages are Shíns.

The Kárdár, Ganga Singh, had on the departure of my friends for Astor, gone to Sher Kil'a, to place on the *gaddí*, or throne, the son of the late 'Ysá Bahádur, chief of that place, who had died a month before our arrival, and now came to see me in state with a large following.

He is a little old man, very polite, was formerly the Darbár Munshí to the Resident at Srínagar. He has lately been made Governor, and is well acquainted with our ways. I told him of my desire to proceed to Gaokuch, the furthest point on the Kashmír frontier. He of course made every excuse, as roads were bad, nothing to be seen, great heat, no food, &c., &c., but seeing I was determined on going, he gave in with a good grace, and made all the arrangements necessary for my comfort and safety.

I visited Colonel Teja Singh, some relative to the Mahárájá of Kashmír, a broken-down old man, and the Sunadis, or General, Mán Singh, who were both hard at work, the former, in drilling the troops, the latter, making improvements in and about the fort. The troops were expecting their usual two-year relief, and longing for the return to Kashmír and Jammú. They have rather hard times of it in this outpost, getting few or no luxuries, as all articles imported are very expensive, and money scarce.

The coinage is copper, and has to be brought from Srínagar, which increases its value much. The usual rate for pice at the capital is ten to the anna, but here only four go to the anna, which makes all small articles in the bazar very expensive, for instance, tobacco, sugar, and salt, all of which have to be imported.\*

In my evening strolls amongst the villages, I came across some ancient mounds and slabs of sandstone and granite, the remains of the palace of a former Rájá by name Shirbudut, regarding whom are many popular

\* It would be a gain to travellers to take coppers with them.

legends, one is—Azro Shamsheer, a demigod who appeared on mount Koh, opposite Minnor, heard how much the people were oppressed by Shirbudut, and came to the palace to try and rid them of the tyrant. The palace had no gates, but the Rájá had a flying horse which used to leap the walls, and alight always on one spot. Shirbudut had a daughter, whom he used to bring out on his horse for a walk at times. Azro while devising some scheme, was one day walking round the Castle walls, when the Rájá and his daughter 'Urzu' suddenly appeared on the horse and alit at their usual place. He hid himself and saw the Rájá go into the mountains to shoot, Urzu being left behind to amuse herself under some shady trees. He went up and made himself known to her, and to make a long story short, they fell in love, and after many difficulties Azro killed the Rájá, married the beautiful Urzu, and became Rájá of Gilgit. They had a daughter by name Jaushiní, who married one of the ancestors of Ahmad Khán, chief of Skardu, by name Mírzá. Jaushiní ruled in Gilgit in her own right, and was as much beloved by the people as Shirbudut had been hated. One day, the Queen and her consort were sitting under the shade of their fruit trees watching their maids treading the wine-vat, when a crow alighted near them and began cawing. She being annoyed asked him to shoot it, but Mírzá from some superstition refused to do so, and the Queen, taking up his gun to fire, shot it dead with a bullet. He was greatly surprised at her good shot, and taking into consideration other wonderful feats he had noticed in reference to his wife, concluded she must be like her father Azro, more than mortal. He separated himself from her, fearing her violent temper and returned to Skardu. The Queen remained in Gilgit, and after reigning eighty years, one day disappeared. The son of her daughter who had married Habí Khán, a Nagyr chief, succeeded her, and from that son was descended Gurtham Khán, Rájá of Gilgit, who is still remembered by "the oldest inhabitant." The old Polo ground near the Masjid now lately taken into use again by the Gilgitís, is said to have been laid out and used by Shirbudut.

The village of Nafúr, situated in the slope of the hills which bound the valley to the west, and considerably above the Fort, has a curious Buddhist figure carved on a rock at the side of a nála, which is said to be very ancient. From this village a good view is obtained of the Gilgit Valley, the temperature also is lower, and having some fine old Chinárs, is a pleasant place to pass the day.

I used to be surrounded by patients, whose number increased daily. They came from all parts, Yassin, Hunza, Nagyr, Dareyl, Tangyr, and Panyal, all surrounding states, even the sepoy and officers from the Fort and traders from Koli and Palas on the Indus came to me for medicine. Every disease flesh is heir to, here finds its representative.

Amongst others the vakíl from Yassin, an old Sayyid, blind of one eye, came to have the other doctored, and after I had applied a remedy, he stood up, and with upraised hands gave me a blessing from the *Korán* in Arabic, to which, when he had finished, the whole assembly said Amen,—an impressive scene.

The old Colonel from the Fort came for some magical elixir, to reinvigorate a system broken down with debauchery—also two merchants from Koli, who were here collecting their debts (which are paid only in gold dust). These were fine large men, but nearly disabled by rheumatism. Goat-herds from Dareyl also came to ask for drugs.

Having now been encamped for a week and the heat daily increasing, I determined to push on as fast as possible, so striking my tent at dawn of the 26th July with only seven coolies and a pony I started. The first part of the way led along a raised road with a canal on the left, and after passing out of the villages, we reached the river, and went along its right bank to the village of Bassein, where they grow rice, down to a nála which is bridged; then the road leads up over a steep spur to the house of 'Azmat Sháh and his family, the rightful heir to Yassin, now a pensioner of the Dogras. He was absent in Srínagar urging his claims, so I did not see him, only his son. There is a nice Polo ground through which the path leads, and a mile beyond, the upper Gilgit Valley begins to close in. The dry steep cliffs radiate great heat, and all is desolation, as far as the hamlet of Hunzil four miles. This spot has been uncultivated for many years past, and we saw the first crop of wheat stacked. There are no trees here, only a few fields and two huts. A high conical mound marks the ruins of a former monument of some sort of which nothing is known.

A short 300 yards beyond is a rock with water near, which affords shade up to noon, the path then ascends a very bad spur called "Katate" and along the steep banks of the river. Just at the worst spot where the path way is so narrow, that two ponies can hardly pass, I met young Fúlád, 'Ysá Bahádur's little son going to Gilgit to be educated. My pony nearly kicked him down into the river, the plucky behaviour of the two men leading the animals (it being too steep to ride) only prevented an unpleasant accident. Then descending to the river bank along a short level, we arrived at the foot of a granite spur up which the path leads, with no shade, only glare and heat.

From the top of the spur, Hunzil is to be seen below, bearing  $340^{\circ}$ , then scrambling down again to the river, which is here very rapid and narrow, we had a long sandy stretch along the water. This part is called 'Yaspur Kun.' The river widens again soon, and reaching some tamarisk trees we rested in the shade at 2 P. M., thermometer in shade  $105^{\circ}$  Fah. The river here has a few islands in its bed covered with long grass and bushes. The path usually runs

along its right bank when the water is low, but owing to its sudden and great rise we had to make a long *detour* over a high hill up which three paths lead, the upper for ponies and the lower for footmen, but being in the jungle with no one to ask the road we had great trouble. The pony had to be led along the upper road, too steep to ride. I wished to go the shortest cut, but the coolies being behind I had no one to show me the way, so I wandered out of the right direction and had great difficulty in finding the road. At 5 P. M., I reached the top, five miles from Hunzil, and saw Panyal below me due west, the descent was very bad. By sunset I reached the first village, three miles from top of the mountain, called Sherote, the last mile only being a good road.

How refreshing it was to enter this oasis! Its rippling streams, shady groves and clustering fruit made us forget the fatigues of the day. The tent was pitched under the Chinárs, where the villagers used to assemble in the cool of the evening.

One of the streams fed a covered tank, used to keep the drinking water cool, and here came the maidens not only to fill their pitchers, but to have a sly peep at the strangers. The village consists of twenty houses, enclosed by a stone wall, which has acted as a fort in past rebellious times. This is called the boundary of Gilgit and the beginning of the country of Panyal. In reality Gilgit ends at Hunzil, but they say a former Rájá gave this and its sister village on the other side of the river, as a dowry with his daughter to a Rájá of Gilgit. The boundary is only political as these Sherotis have the same manners and customs as all the others villagers of Panyal.

Panyal is the long upper valley of the same river I had been following. The people are all Shí'ahs, instead of Sunnís as in Gilgit. Their language is almost the same, but with less Panjábí, and more Yassini and Persian. Throughout this valley the people keep silkworms, and reel silk. They also make wine; of course this to an orthodox Sunní is a great sin, so they are called Ráfízí, Moghlí, and other terms equivalent to Káfir. The inhabitants are much more free and easy than in Gilgit; the women do not hide themselves or their faces, they are all dark brown, but not black. Some few of Yassin and Chitral mixture are fairer than the rest, but the great heat of the summer keeps the colour quite brown. My cook quite beat by the march, did not give me my dinner till late, and as I lit my lamp, the young fry collected round me, and I shared my roast fowl with two boys who seemed very much to enjoy a change of food, and were the envy of all the others.

Two sepoys live here to collect toll, and tithes of all the produce in kind, money being a very scarce commodity. These men are to be found thus in pairs in all the villages of this country, they feed on the fat of the land, pay for nothing, and consequently are well hated. They assisted me to get

my coolies, so that I was able to start early, after giving out a few doses of medicine, the fact of being able to obtain medicine gratis has gone before me, it is the first thing I am asked for, and I have obtained the name of the Hakím Sáhib. I wish I were better able to support the title, it was little I could do, my stock being very small. The narrow path between the high walls and hedges of the gardens took some time in traversing, but when clear of the village, I saw that the valley here is only about three-quarters of a mile wide, very barren looking, shut in with high bare hills. The path leads down to the nála which runs from the Hills to the south, past the small Fort of Shipyot. This has six bastions, and was built by the Dogras about twelve years ago on the occasion of the attack of Malik Amán and his brother Mír Walí from Yassin, 'Ysá Bahádur defeated them by help from Gilgit.

The river runs close under the Fort. We now enter into the territories of Panyal proper under 'Ysá Bahádur, the chief of Sher K̄il'a, or rather under his son, as 'Ysá died lately. After crossing a long sandy flat, at least twenty feet above the ordinary level of the river, which has been known in high floods to cover it and do great damage to the surrounding countries, we ascended gently up to the village and Fort of Golapur, about five miles from Sherote. The village nestles under its cool green trees, and is famous for its grapes. About twenty houses are scattered over the slope.

I pitched in a garden of apple trees laden with fruit. The next garden, enclosed by a wall, belongs to Rájá Langar Khán, he was absent in Kashmír, having gone as a hostage for two years, leaving his family here. His little son, five years old, came to make his saláms and brought a basket of fruit. A faqír and his son, both very intelligent, came to have a chat. They only speak Persian and Yassini, and being Badakhshís, they were quite fair, with delicate features, they made their livelihood by doctoring and selling charms, and were quite glad to see a real Hakím as they thought. Their general remedies are opium, arsenic, sulphur, and mercury, which are used equally for all diseases. I gave them some quinine, which they had not seen before, also a very potent medicine in the shape of Worcester Sauce !!, a tea spoonful of which nearly choking them, gave them a great idea of the efficacy of my drugs.

Leaving Golapur next day, we came shortly in sight of Sher K̄il'a, a large fort and village surrounded by gardens and fields, on the opposite side or left bank of the river, situated on a long slope from the high hills which back it.

Our road led over tolerably level ground, and along a cliff above the river about 50 feet high, path very narrow, rocks of conglomerate and sandstone. The Fort has 13 towers and is the largest in Gilgit. The communication to this right bank is by a rope bridge of the usual shaky structure. Animals crossing have to be swum across, which is only possible when the river is low.

When we arrived opposite the Fort, I was met by the young and newly

made Rájá Akbar Khán, son of 'Isá Bahádur, and his following. He is a heavy-featured lad of eighteen, and speaks little but his mother-tongue. After a short chat with his people and the Guard of Honor, supplied him from Gilgit, (in reality to overawe the rather turbulent population) I continued my march. The path then descends to the level of the river along a narrow ledge, the site of many a fight, opposite which is the village of Hammuchul on the left bank. The spur of Gaishéli with its steep climb brought us to the upland slope of Dalnath, with its bright sparkling stream allowed to run to waste, the village having been depopulated in one of the late wars and never been re-inhabited.

This fact of depopulation is the curse of this small but fertile valley. Situated between two powerful neighbours, Gilgit and Yassin, the unfortunate people have suffered from both sides, have been taken off *en masse*, either to populate Yassin or sold into slavery, a few finding refuge in the neighbouring states of Dareyl and Tangyr. After our midday meal under the shade of the willows which border the Dalnath stream, we wended our weary way over a bad rocky spur down again to the river, then up again over a hill side opposite to the nála which brings water from the high hills above, to the village of Japoké on the left bank; then continuing we reached Gitch, a small village, 8 miles from Golapur; then again by a level path over a stony uncultivated flat above the river, from which we began to ascend a narrow ledge of limestone rocks, with a very difficult bad road, hardly passable for ponies, but easily defended.

A second road leads up over the tops of the hills from Shere, so as to avoid this narrow ledge, and is the usual road taken by an hostile force from Yassin. At the highest point of this narrow ledge and high up over the river which rushes past its perpendicular base, is a flat stone under which a lookout is kept towards Yassin, to give warning to Sher Kil'a, in case of trouble, which in Goraman's days was common enough. Opposite this place, on the left bank, is a small village of Dajipoker with its few corn fields. The path improves as the ledge of rocks becomes broader, and finally leads to Singul, a large village with extensive gardens and fields with a small fort for its defence. This was our halting-place, and while the camp was being pitched, I took a stroll into the fort. Conceive a space of 150 feet square, surrounded by 25 to 30 feet walls, without any space left as a court, but quite crowded by small irregular huts, some parts in two to three stories, communicating one with another by dark passages and notched logs of wood to ascend to the roofs; then imagine this crowded with men, women, and children, all their rags, cooking pots, agricultural implements, guns, dogs, and fowls, and a faint idea of the conditions under which they live can be obtained. The force of circumstances obliged them to crowd into forts in former days, but as Dogra rule has been paramount for at least twelve years, habit has still

the mastery, and sooner than live out, each on his own land, they still sleep at night inside their forts, collecting the cattle close under the walls in enclosures outside.

The stream which supplies this village flows down from the range of mountains that divide Dareyl from Gilgit, and along this nála come the wild inhabitants of those hills to seek a description of salt-earth for themselves and their goats, on vast flocks of which they principally subsist, agriculture being at the lowest ebb owing to the insecurity of life and property.

This village of Singul, where I stayed a week on my return from Gaokuch, waiting for an answer to a letter I had sent to the Kárdár for permission to explore the nála to the confines of Dareyl, (but to which he would not consent saying it was too dangerous) presents nothing to attract the traveller except its simplicity. I used to roam about the fields and gardens, which are well cultivated, producing maize, wheat, barley, beans, carrots, turnips, pumpkins, gourds used for carrying water, radishes, cucumbers, and garden stuff, as salads, spinach, capsicum, mint, fennel, pepper, one or two plants which yield dye, &c., &c.

The fruits in season were pomegranates, grapes of three sorts, figs, apples, mulberries, peaches, apricots, and walnuts, from the kernels of which they make oil, melons and a few cherries. All these fruits ripen towards the end of summer, so I used to feast daily on the best while chatting to the villagers at work, a quietly inclined people if let alone. No doubt with proper security for property, and no marauding sepoys allowed, the whole of Panyal would produce silk and grain more than enough to pay its expenses.

Iron is not found in the valley of Gilgit, coming mostly from Ladak and Kashmír, consequently there are few workmen. The utensils they use are mostly of a coarse soft green semi-transparent stone, called Baloshbut, or pot stone; these stand fire and are universally used throughout the surrounding countries. Bullet moulds are also cut out of the same material.

They do not consume much meat, being too poor, but live principally on coarse mixed flour, cakes, ghí and milk. Wine in large quantities is made, every large garden having its wine vats. The manufacture is of the simplest description. A trough four feet long by two broad and three feet deep, is constructed of large flat stones cemented with clay; at one side, near the bottom, is a hole, closed with a wooden plug covered with cloth. The grapes plucked in bunches by the women and children are carried in large baskets, of which the side next the back is flat; the grapes are thrown into the vat as they come from the garden, when heaped up a boy gets in and with naked feet treads it all into a mash; the plug is removed, and the juice flows off into a large hole in the ground immediately under. Here it remains covered up for a month or two, till fermentation is over, or till the owner has no further patience.





*J. Schaumburg, Lith.*

VIEW OF GAOKUCH.

*(From a painting by Capt. T. R. Davidson & a drawing by Capt. Marsh.)*



The hour fixed for the opening is a joyous one, young and old, men and women, assemble to take a little, and amidst a tumult of joyful acclamations and song, they bear away the precious liquid, and store it in their rooms in the fort. Having no pottery, being unacquainted with its manufacture, most of the liquid is drunk as soon as possible, and a little kept in skin bags and wooden bowls. The women never get drunk, the men often.

I was greatly troubled by sandflies at this place, which are worse in shady damp places, but in a dry spot they only appear at sunrise and sunset.

On marching from Singul, we first crossed the nála, at the mouth of which it is situated, by a rope bridge. Large quantities of fish were observed lying quietly at the bottom, no one troubling them by net or line.\* A guard remains here on the lookout for armed Dareyl robbers, who come down the nála on marauding expeditions.

A dam of stones turns off the stream from washing away the fort. The road leads along the flat and high bank on which there is no cultivation, being covered with boulders detached by earthquakes from the granite rocks above; these are of no rare occurrence, I saw a case of a large fall of rocks and earth close to the Fort at Gilgit during a slight shock we had. A couple of miles brought us to the village of Gulmutti, opposite which is the large Fort and village of Bubbur.† The influence of the Rájá of Gaokuch commences here, as they give tithes to him as well as to Sher Kil'a. Changing coolies at the fort of Gulmutti, where they brought me a large present of grapes and melons, we continued along close to the river opposite the small cultivation of Barjur, a hamlet of Bubbur; the road thence ascends a high spur, called Singdas, which shuts in the river, to a small gorge through which it rushes with great violence.

As I was toiling up on foot, the path very steep and bad, the sun very powerful, I was met by the Rájá of Gaokuch with his 'rikáb', or following. Mutually rushing into each other's embrace, and anxiously enquiring after one another's health and welfare, we continued our course, dipping down to the river again, where under the shade of a few tamarisk bushes, he made me eat a fine melon and smoke the Calmet of Peace. 'Áfiat Khán is a thick set, dark, middle-sized man of common-place appearance, about forty years of age. He was mounted on a good young pony 13·2 hands high, of his own breeding, carrying him well over the bad slippery rocks; finally we ascended the side of the plateau on which Gaokuch stands. The fort and village are situated about two miles further on; no vegetation on this plain till we reached the village. The whole valley is about 1½ miles broad, but as we have been gradually ascending the whole way from Gilgit,

\* Otters also abound. The people catch fish by small conical baskets fixed into the end of a dam across the stream.

† A small colony of Sayyids make it of some importance.

the surrounding hills, quite bare, are not so high as lower down. The Singdas spur divides Panyal from Gaokuch. As we approached the Fort, the distant snow-covered hills of Yassin and Pamir came into view. On coming up to the fort, the Dogra sepoy who guard the district, formed up and presented arms to us, a motley group armed with flint-lock smooth bore muskets. My encamping ground, on this 29th July, was a level of green sward, fringed with willow trees, a delightful contrast to the bare rocks and glare of the last few days' journey. Here I was at the end of civilization, and truly glad to have arrived at the object of my desires. The Gaokuch plateau is bounded to the north by high rocky hillocks which descend precipitously to the river. The Fort is built on a large rock, the sketch was taken from the top of one of those overlooking the river, on the top of which I disturbed a flock of urial, or wild sheep.

The whole valley is about two miles broad, of which the plateau takes up  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile, the river and some uncultivated strips on the opposite bank, the rest. This is the 'ultima Thule' of India, or rather of the influence of British Rule. Just beyond Gaokuch, and divided from it by a deep ravine, commence the fields of the extreme frontier village of Aish, and beyond, about four miles, comes the frontier of Yassin. From both sides of the border a strict watch is kept on the opposite party, no one being allowed to pass without a messenger from either Chief accompanying him. I went with the Rájá to the furthest point possible, and there we found two lads of sixteen, keeping a sharp lookout, their matchlocks resting against the rocks close by, and if we had attempted to go further, the Yassins, though we could not see them, would have been sure to have taken a shot at us.

Below us was an expanse of river bed about half a mile broad, without a living creature, or fish or fowl being visible. Opposite was the valley of Karambar winding away into the distance, little known or used, and down it was rushing a broad stream of dirty water direct from the snowy heights of the Pamir. It forms its junction with the stream from Yassin at this point, meeting at about right angles. The two streams create a great commotion, when, as now, the snows are melting, filling the whole bed with a shallow flood.\*

On returning to Aish and its fields of golden grain and shady groves, I found under a clump of fine trees a repast laid out in true native style: a basket of hot chapátis baked like "nán", another with a large bowl of fresh curds in which was a wooden spoon. Spreading blankets we all sat down, and had our share of bread with a slice of raw cucumber and salt handed to each of us, the curds were placed in the middle of the party, and

\* At the head of the Karambar is a lake formed by a glacier, which dams up the valley; when the lake gets too full and heavy, the dam breaks, causing the fearful rush of water which makes the Indus flood.